

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 789

By McNally

A RESOLUTION to commend Dr. Joel L. Cunningham on his appointment as vice chancellor and president of the University of the South.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should specially recognize those persons who have dedicated their professional lives and personal excellence to education; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Joel L. Cunningham is one such estimable person who was recently named the 15th vice chancellor and president of the University of the South in Sewanee, a co-educational institution of liberal arts and sciences with 1,300 undergraduate students and a graduate theological school of 100 students; and

WHEREAS, located on 10,000 picturesque acres on the Cumberland Plateau, the University of the South was founded in 1857 by leaders of the Episcopal Church; today, the school is consistently ranked among the top liberal arts colleges in the nation; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Cunningham was unanimously nominated by the university's 16-member search committee following a national search; he will succeed Dr. Samuel R. Williamson, who will retire in June after 12 years of distinguished service to the University of the South; and

WHEREAS, raised in Oak Ridge, Dr. Cunningham is a 1965 graduate of the University of Chattanooga which is now known as the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Cunningham earned an M.A. and a Ph.D. in mathematics from the University of Oregon; he taught mathematics at the University of Kentucky from 1969-74, before returning to his alma mater in Chattanooga to serve as a faculty member and dean of continuing education from 1974-79; and

WHEREAS, during his remarkable tenure at UTC, he spent a year as an American Council on Education Fellow in Academic Administration, working closely with the chancellor of the University Tennessee at Knoxville, and the president of the University of Tennessee system; and

WHEREAS, in 1979, Dr. Cunningham was selected as vice-president for academic affairs, dean of faculty and professor of mathematics at Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, in 1984, he was deservedly named as president of Susquehanna; his illustrious tenure at the school has been marked by remarkable growth in the academic quality of the institution, increased enrollment and good financial health; all of these factors have earned Susquehanna widespread acclaim as one of the best small universities in the Northeast; and

WHEREAS, this gifted educator played an integral role in the reorganization of the school's academic programs into three schools; this new structure led to Susquehanna's Sigmund Weis School of Business achieving accreditation from the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business; and

WHEREAS, Joel Cunningham's outstanding success in improving Susquehanna's academic programs and enhancing its community service component is directly attributable to his reliance on the time-honored values of dedication and integrity, and his uncommon ability to work well with people from all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, upon his selection to the presidency of the University of the South, the Rt. Rev. Don A. Wimberly, chancellor of the university and chair of its 142-member board of trustees appropriately stated that Dr. Cunningham "is committed to an institution of academic excellence with a religious foundation and tradition of service. His steady, experienced leadership provides us with the confidence that he is called to lead Sewanee into this new century"; and

WHEREAS, Joel Cunningham is extremely dedicated to his profession, as illustrated by his adroit service as a founding member of both the National Campus Compact and the Pennsylvania Campus Compact, organizations for student public service; and

WHEREAS, he chaired the Commission on Policy Analysis of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities from 1993-95, and served with distinction as president of the Society for Values in Higher Education from 1995-99; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Cunningham has contributed his time and immeasurable talents as president of Sigma Chi Fraternity (International), as a member of the American Mathematical Society and the Mathematical Association of America, as a trustee of Tressler Luther Services, as a member and chair of the board of directors of Sunbury Community Hospital, and as a member of the board of directors of the Apple Hill Chamber Music Center; and

WHEREAS, his many accomplishments aside, Joel Cunningham enjoys the love and companionship of his wife, Trudy Bender Cunningham, who is in her 21st year as an educator at Bucknell University; and their two daughters, Nancy and Susan; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Cunningham epitomizes the ideal of the consummate professional and dedicated educator, and he should be appropriately recognized for his commitment to living the examined life with liberality and conviction; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we hereby congratulate Dr. Joel L. Cunningham on his appointment as

vice chancellor and president of the University of the South, and extend to him our best wishes for every continued success as he assumes the helm of this prestigious institution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation to Dr. Cunningham with this final clause omitted from such copy.